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Groups of countries in special situations: specific actions related to the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries: outcome of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation

Letter dated 30 July 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Mali to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In my capacity as Chairman of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries, I have the honour to transmit the report of the Thematic Meeting on Transit Transport Infrastructure Development (see annex I). The Meeting was held in Ouagadougou from 18 to 20 June 2007 as part of the preparatory process for the midterm review of the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 61/212.

The main stakeholders of the Almaty Programme of Action, namely landlocked developing countries, transit developing countries, donor countries and international, regional and subregional organizations, participated in the Meeting. The Meeting resulted in the adoption of a Chairman's summary (see annex II).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annexes could be circulated as a document of the sixty-second session of the General Assembly, under item 59 (b) of the provisional agenda.

(*Signed*) Cheick Sidi **Diarra**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* A/62/150.

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Annex I to the letter dated 30 July 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Mali to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Report of the Thematic Meeting on Transit Transport Infrastructure Development convened as part of the preparatory process for the midterm review of the Almaty Programme of Action

Ouagadougou, 18-20 June 2007

I. Introduction

1. Landlocked developing countries face special problems caused by their lack of territorial access to the sea and their remoteness and isolation from world markets. To address these issues, the General Assembly convened in 2003 a United Nations Conference which adopted the Almaty Programme of Action: Addressing the Special Needs of Landlocked Developing Countries within a New Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation for Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries.

2. In its resolution 61/212, the General Assembly decided to hold a midterm review in 2008 of the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action. The midterm review would be preceded by regional and substantive preparations in the most effective, well structured and broad participatory manner. Also, intergovernmental mechanisms at the global and regional levels, including those of United Nations regional commissions, as well as relevant substantive material and statistical data, should be effectively utilized in the review process. The Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States was requested by the General Assembly to coordinate the preparatory process. The United Nations system organizations, including the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Development Programme, the regional commissions and relevant international and regional organizations, were also requested, within their respective mandates, to provide necessary support to the review process.

3. The Thematic Meeting on Transit Transport Infrastructure Development is the first of the two thematic meetings being organized in 2007. The second thematic meeting will focus on international trade and trade facilitation and will be held in Ulaanbaatar on 30 and 31 August 2007. The outcomes of these thematic meetings will serve as substantive inputs to the 2008 midterm review.

4. The Almaty Programme of Action recognized that inadequate infrastructure is a major obstacle to establishing efficient transit transport systems in landlocked and transit developing countries. The Almaty Programme of Action identified specific actions in rail transport, road transport, ports, inland waterways, pipelines, air transport and communications. Efficient transport and communications infrastructure and services are a vital prerequisite for the development of landlocked developing countries and their effective integration into the international trading system and the world economy. Interregional and overseas transport and communications facilitate the expansion of trade because trade is only possible if people and goods can physically reach the production and consumption area at a

competitive cost. The deterioration of transport infrastructure is one of the main problems that affects both landlocked and transit developing countries. Communications facilities are required to facilitate advance knowledge of transport service availabilities and to ensure smooth and speedy transit.

5. The Meeting adopted a Chairman's summary (see annex II).

6. The opening session of the meeting was attended by Alain B. Yoda, Minister of State, Minister of Health and Representative of the Prime Minister, Head of the Government of Burkina Faso; Jean-Baptiste Compaore, Minister of Economy and Finance of Burkina Faso; Gilbert Noël Ouedraogo, Minister of Transport of Burkina Faso; Hippolyte Lingani, Minister of Infrastructure of Burkina Faso; Laurent Sedogo, Minister of Environment of Burkina Faso; Choguel Maïga, Minister of Industry and Trade of Mali and Chairman of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries; the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States of the United Nations Secretariat; the Deputy Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA); and Alain Edouard Traore, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Environment, President of the Steering Committee of Burkina Faso.

II. Opening session

7. In her statement, the Deputy Executive Secretary of ECA called upon the international community and the private sector to assist landlocked and transit developing countries in building and enhancing transit transport networks.

8. The Deputy Executive Secretary recalled that 15 African countries were landlocked and 9 of the 12 poorest countries in the world were landlocked African countries. Transit transport development was therefore of a great concern in Africa. She emphasized that landlocked countries spent on average 15 per cent of their exports earnings in transports, while other developing countries spent only 7 per cent and developed countries 4 per cent of their export earnings in transport. Those additional costs reduced their competitiveness and the level of subregional and international trade.

9. Praising the efforts of regional economic communities which developed transport programmes, the Deputy Executive Secretary noted that except for Central African countries, all African landlocked countries were linked to a port through a paved road or a railway.

10. The Deputy Executive Secretary recalled that at a meeting held in Cairo in 2006, African States agreed that a priority in national poverty reduction strategies was to orientate investments towards productive sectors, including the transport sector, which would contribute to the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action.

11. The Deputy Executive Secretary added that parallel to the political leadership of the African Union and to the efforts of the African Development Bank to mobilize resources, the Economic Commission for Africa contributed to regional integration by strengthening transport infrastructure, providing direct technical assistance to member States, individually or on a regional basis. She reassured African States of the support of the Economic Commission for Africa in the implementation of the

Almaty Programme of Action, particularly through the African Action Plan adopted in Addis Ababa in May 2003.

12. The Deputy Executive Secretary concluded her statement by noting that developing public-private partnerships would create an alternate source of financing that could compensate for limited budgetary resources in landlocked and transit developing countries.

13. In his statement, the Minister of Industry and Trade of Mali, Chairman of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries, paid tribute to the former President of the Group, Choummaly Sayasone of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, whose efforts led to, inter alia, the successful preparation and implementation to date of the 2003 Almaty Programme of Action and the inclusion of issues relating to landlocked developing countries in the outcome of major international conferences, such as the 2005 World Summit held in September 2005 and the first Summit of the Group of the Landlocked Developing Countries held in Havana in September 2006.

14. The Minister noted that individual States lacked the capacity to solve the problems caused by the lack of access to the sea by themselves. Therefore, subregional and regional approach should be a preferred solution. He was also convinced that this approach should be complemented by the commitment of countries to rely on their own forces. He expressed satisfaction that with the support of their development partners, subregional and regional strategies were being developed and their implementation started. He added that transport infrastructure development, particularly transit transport infrastructure development, was one of the priorities of the Government of Mali.

15. In his statement, the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States recalled that being landlocked was "a challenge, not a destiny". He added that specific actions were needed in order to overcome that challenge. To that end, the General Assembly had organized a Conference in 2003 in Kazakhstan, which had adopted the Almaty Programme of Action to meet the needs of landlocked developing countries, for which a midterm review of the Programme was planned for 2008.

16. The Under-Secretary-General emphasized that the success in the implementation of the Almaty Programme priorities would indeed depend on the strength of the partnership among all stakeholders. He added that enhanced, more focused and long-term financial assistance from the multilateral, regional and bilateral donors was crucial. Investments were also needed in the establishment of public-private partnerships; capacity-building; legal and regulatory reforms; and institutional and administrative reviews, including in-depth analysis of each landlocked country's foreign trade composition and its transport constraints.

17. The main objective of the Meeting was to review progress made at the national, subregional, regional and international levels in the implementation of priority 2 of the Almaty Programme of Action, "Infrastructure development and maintenance", and to deliberate on future actions needed to further strengthen the global partnership for establishing efficient transit transport systems. He stressed the crucial importance of the outcome of the meeting, which would serve as substantive input to the 2008 midterm review. He concluded his statement by reconfirming that the United Nations as a whole, and his Office in particular, would continue to

support the efforts of the landlocked developing countries and their transit neighbours towards the successful implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action.

18. The Minister of State and Minister of Health of Burkina F.so, representing the Prime Minister of Burkina Faso, officially opened the Meeting. He congratulated President Amadou Toumani Touré of Mali on his election as President of the Group of the Landlocked Developing Countries.

19. The Minister emphasized the importance of integration policies, in particular those linked to the economy, which should be the foundation for sustainable development in landlocked developing countries. He noted that the Almaty Programme of Action had observed that weak infrastructure limited the competitiveness of products originating in landlocked developing countries in international markets. He noted some additional exogenous factors, such as the dependency of landlocked developing countries on the infrastructure and policies and stability of transit countries, as well as their administrative transit procedures.

20. He expressed that one of the main reasons for the marginalization of landlocked developing countries was high transaction costs. Landlocked and transit developing countries therefore needed assistance in crossing borders, promoting the use of informatics, setting up efficient customs checking systems by simplifying administrative procedures, and enhancing the power of governmental trade organizations. He stressed that bilateral and subregional cooperation should help in trade harmonization and facilitation.

21. The Minister expressed the urgency of creating bilateral and multilateral, national and international partnerships between the public and the private sectors.

22. He noted that the New Partnership for Africa's Development had launched major initiatives allowing landlocked and transit developing countries to progressively acquire subregional and regional infrastructure. In addition, those initiatives had been adopted by regional economic communities, in particular the West African Economic and Monetary Union and the Economic Community of West African States. He added that African landlocked countries from the Sahel were particularly vulnerable to weak transport infrastructure.

23. He described the efforts of Burkina Faso to build and maintain transit transport infrastructure. The five-year programme of the President of Burkina Faso took this into account, particularly the need to modernize economic and service infrastructure. He mentioned, however, that those efforts were insufficient and that the challenge of infrastructure required more than States could achieve by themselves. He thus called upon developed countries and other development partners to respect their commitment towards landlocked developing countries.

III. Exchange of views on the state of transit transport infrastructure in landlocked and transit developing countries

24. Statements were made by the following heads of delegations of United Nations Member States: Hippolyte Lingani, Minister of Infrastructure of Burkina Faso; Bilge Cankorel, Ambassador, head of the delegation of Turkey; Barlybay Sadykov,

Deputy Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the United Nations; Juan Buffa, Deputy Permanent Representative of Paraguay to the United Nations; Guadalupe Palomeque, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bolivia; Galsan Bekhbat, Ministry of Road, Transport and Tourism of Mongolia; Naindra Prasad Upadhaya, Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies of Nepal; Gilbert Noël Ouedraogo, Minister of Transport of Burkina Faso; Tsele Chakela, Minister of Public Works and Transport of Lesotho; Areg Hovhannisyan, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia; Ali Traore, Conseil burkinabé des Chargeurs of Burkina Faso; Pang Chengjun, Permanent Mission of China to the United Nations; Onkar Sarup, High Commission of India to Ghana; Owen Singini, Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Housing of Malawi; Mahamadou Diallo, Ministry of Equipment and Transportation of Mali; Jean Nsengiyumva, Roads Authority of Namibia; Hall Mahamane Habibou, Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation of Niger; Benedict Lukwiya, Permanent Mission of Uganda to the United Nations; Bernard Nfundu, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Zambia to the United Nations; Morgan Dube, Permanent Mission of Zimbabwe to the United Nations.

IV. Efforts of international and regional organizations to assist landlocked and transit developing countries in developing their transit transport infrastructure

25. Keynote remarks were given by Jeffrey Sachs, Director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University, through videoconference.

26. Presentations were made by representatives of the following international and regional bodies: Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States of the United Nations Secretariat; Economic Commission for Africa; Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific; African Development Bank; United Nations Conference on Trade and Development; and World Bank.

V. Special session on the subregional dimension of transit transport infrastructure development

27. Presentations were made by representatives of the following regional and subregional organizations: Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, West African Economic and Monetary Union, Maritime Organization of West and Central Africa, Mercado Comun del Sur, Economic Community for Central African States, Transport Corridor Europe Caucasus Asia, East African Community, Transit Transport Coordination Authority of the Northern Corridor and African Union.

VI. Special presentations

28. Richard Norment, Executive Director of the National Council for Public-Private Partnerships of the United States of America, made a special presentation on public-private partnerships.

29. Laurent Sedogo, Minister for the Environment of Burkina Faso, made a special presentation on the sustainability of transit transport infrastructure and impact on the environment.

VII. Closing session

30. The Meeting adopted a Chairman's summary (see annex II). The list of participants is contained in annex III.

Annex II to the letter dated 30 July 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Mali to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Chairman's Summary adopted by the Thematic Meeting on Transit Transport Infrastructure Development of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries

I. Assessment of current situation

1. Despite some progress in the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action: Addressing the Special Needs and Problems of Landlocked Developing Countries within a New Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation since its adoption in 2003 by the General Assembly, landlocked developing countries continue to face the particular problems linked to their geographical handicaps compounded with lack of adequate transit transport infrastructure and cumbersome procedures and regulations.

2. Although the difficulties of being landlocked permeate every aspect of the development process and poverty alleviation, their impact on the evolution of external trade is particularly severe. The additional transit transport costs, which landlocked countries must bear, constrain export development since this burden limits the range of potential exports and markets in which goods can be competitively and profitably traded. The price of imports tends to soar owing to high transport costs. High transport costs remain the single most important obstacle to their equitable access to global markets and competition with other countries and the main reason why landlocked developing countries continued to be marginalized from the international trading system, with a dismal share in the world market of goods.

3. Inadequate infrastructure in rail transport, road transport, ports, inland waterways, pipelines, air transport and information and communications technology, missing links, few harmonized rules and procedures, little cross-border investment and private-sector participation are the major problems faced by landlocked developing countries. Efficient transport infrastructure and services are a vital prerequisite for the development of landlocked developing countries and their effective integration into the international trading system and the world economy. The deterioration of transport infrastructure is one of the main problems that affects both landlocked and transit developing countries. The broad use of information and communication technologies in the transit transport operations would greatly increase the efficiency of the existing transit facilities.

4. The preliminary data compiled by the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States shows that there is a little improvement in transit transport infrastructure development in landlocked developing countries. The total volume of road networks in landlocked developing countries was 1.04 million kilometres (km) in 2004, up from about 974,000 km in 2003; only about 40 per cent of the total is paved. The combined rail network of all landlocked developing countries is roughly 40,000 km. African and Asian railway networks are still not interconnected. The total air cargo of landlocked developing countries reached 351.3 million tons per year. The aircraft fleets of individual

carriers in landlocked countries are small; the airlines' networks are dispersed and aircraft utilization is low; costs are high. The links among subregions have been poor because of the lack of appropriate policy for regulating the air transport industry.

5. In terms of telecommunication infrastructure, on average in 2003, there were 5.1 main phone lines per 100 inhabitants for landlocked developing countries. These countries also lag behind in the application of the mobile technology, with an average of 6.8 mobile subscribers per 100 inhabitants in 2003. The growing digital divide is also a major concern: whereas landlocked developing countries had 15.1 personal computers per 1,000 inhabitants in 2003, the world mean was 100.8.

6. Addressing the need to develop reliable transit transport communications infrastructure requires considerable investment; the establishment of public-private partnerships; capacity-building; legal and regulatory reforms; and institutional and administrative reviews, including in-depth analysis of each landlocked country's foreign trade composition and its transport constraints. Coordinating transport infrastructure in one country is already a huge task; doing it across borders is even more difficult.

II. Mobilization of financial resources for transit transport infrastructure development

7. Since transit transport infrastructure development is the precondition for long-term growth, national budgets need to give priority to transit transport infrastructure development, including necessary allocations for maintenance and rehabilitation.

8. The cost implications of meeting the requirements in establishing and maintaining efficient transit transport systems are so large that landlocked and transit developing countries cannot accomplish such a formidable task on their own. With the low rate of return of infrastructure investment, international financial assistance continues to remain the major source for infrastructure development of landlocked developing countries to break the deadlock. There is one welcome development: in 2005, total official development assistance (ODA) received by landlocked developing countries from Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development countries increased to US$ 14.7. However, only about 3.7 per cent of ODA was allocated to transport, storage and communications infrastructure development, down from 6.3 per cent in 2003. That is a major concern for landlocked and transit developing countries.

9. The World Bank, the regional development banks and other multilateral financial and development institutions should provide greater financial assistance for development of transit transport infrastructure in landlocked and transit developing countries and the completion of missing links in the subregional and regional transport network that would connect landlocked developing countries with the rest of the region. Also, multilateral and bilateral institutions should redouble their efforts to encourage public and private-sector investment in the transit transport infrastructure development in landlocked developing countries through, inter alia, investment guarantee schemes.

10. Landlocked developing countries need innovative approaches to finance infrastructure and appropriate policies to encourage private participation to create a

conducive environment to attract private-sector participation in infrastructure development projects, particularly through public-private partnerships. Investment in infrastructure has accelerated in recent years, particularly in those countries that have taken bold measures in attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) via privatization. There is considerable potential for private-sector involvement in infrastructure development in landlocked developing countries. Consideration should also be given to regional venture funds for infrastructure projects.

III. Subregional and regional cooperation for transit transport infrastructure development

11. Cooperation across borders with the transit countries is crucial for the establishment of efficient transit transport systems. Transits will be easier and less costly for both landlocked and transit countries if implemented in an integrated environment. Regional cooperation and integration involving landlocked and transit developing countries can be an asset through pooling limited resources and achieving needed economies of scale. Two points require particular attention. First, through regional integration, the handicap of border crossings is eased to facilitate access to neighbouring countries and overseas markets. Second, the development of infrastructure increasingly proceeds on a regional basis. Landlocked developing countries which belong to thriving regional integration organizations appear to perform better than others as hosts for foreign direct investment and integration into the regional transit transport infrastructure network.

12. The regional integration organizations have been making serious efforts over the past years to expand their transport and communications infrastructure and improve their services to ensure their sustainable development. In that regard, a number of far-reaching agreements have been signed to plan and set a standard for regional transport infrastructure development and identify missing links in the regional transport networks. Many policy reforms have been conducted to simplify and streamline the procedures and to attract the private sector and to establish road funds etc. However, due to lack of appropriate policy frameworks in the sector and problems associated with institutional structures, the growth and efficiency of the sector remain far from satisfactory.

13. For landlocked countries, transit routes to the sea can also be improved by programmes to develop an integrated subregional and regional transport network, such as the development of trans-African highways; Asian highways and railways; and the Initiative for the Integration of Regional Infrastructure in South America. Investment needs for landlocked developing countries should be identified and priority attention should be given to the completion of missing links in the context of those regional initiatives. Also, the Development Corridor and Spatial Development Initiative (SDI) in southern Africa is very useful. SDI places transport in general and transit transport in particular in a broader socio-economic context that views transport from a holistic perspective. It recognizes the interdependence of transport with other sectors. It was emphasized that priority attention should be given to the transit transport infrastructure development and completing missing links in the regional infrastructure network.

14. Although most regional economic communities established transport policy frameworks, the clear strategies, benchmarks, targets and time frames needed to

implement them are lacking. Indicators should be developed to measure the performance of the regional economic communities in transport integration, including physical integration, policy convergence and operational issues. The role of the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development is particularly important for the transit transport infrastructure development in the African continent.

15. Effective regional cooperation for transit transport infrastructure development will require good governance, improved peace and security, and compliance with agreements reached at the regional and subregional levels. It will require policy reforms; building physical and human capacity; modernizing management; attracting more private-sector involvement; improving trade facilitation measures; adopting appropriate corridor approaches; improving safety and security; introducing new technologies; and ensuring that infrastructure development policies take poverty reduction into account.

16. Regional integration communities and corridor management committees need both financial and technical assistance in their efforts to establish efficient transit transport systems in their respective regions.

17. Transit transport cooperation is an important area for South-South cooperation since both landlocked and transit developing counties are developing countries. The Almaty Programme of Action provides an excellent framework for South-South cooperation.

IV. Enabling environment for the transit transport infrastructure development

18. Transit transport infrastructure is more than hardware. Policy measures should be further developed to improve the efficiency of the use of existing transit transport infrastructure facilities. To that end, border crossing and customs procedures and excessive requirements for documentation should be further simplified and streamlined; adjacent border control points should be broadly developed; unnecessary checkpoints and customs points should be reduced substantially; bureaucratic bottlenecks and paper work should be significantly reduced; modern computer technology should be widely introduced; and the implementation of regional and subregional agreements should be strengthened.

19. The establishment of a sound framework for business, involving good governance on the part of both the public and private sectors on the basis of transparent rules and regulations and the elaboration of best practices, are the vital prerequisite for the development of efficient transit transport infrastructure development. This includes human capital and social infrastructure. Human resource development is essential for infrastructure building and maintenance. Landlocked and transit developing countries need more assistance in this area. It was emphasized that both recipient landlocked and transit developing countries and donor countries should take the necessary measures to increase the accountability of the effective use of funds allocated for transit transport infrastructure development.

20. Landlocked and transit developing countries need to adopt transparent policies and strategies to liberalize access to infrastructure markets and to move to market-based provision of infrastructure services. Reforms need to strengthen private-sector

participation and empower the private sector by involving it in policy dialogue and advocacy for improvements in operational efficiency. Policies to regulate competition should be in place.

21. Governments should give high priority to the transport sector by formulating and strengthening their policies to attract investment in infrastructure and related services. In this context, private-sector participation has an important role in improving the quality of transport and transit services, including through a public-private partnership framework.

22. Decisions concerning transport development projects should be taken, in consultation, as appropriate, with relevant stakeholders. In order to ensure suitable and efficient investment allocation for infrastructure development, it is vital for local and national authorities to exercise true ownership over such programmes and projects.

V. Role of international financial and development institutions and international organizations

23. Donor countries, United Nations system organizations, multilateral financial and development institutions, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the regional commissions, the World Bank, the regional development banks, the World Customs Organization and the World Trade Organization should provide better coordinated and coherent financial and technical assistance to landlocked and transit developing countries in the form of grants or concessional loans for the construction, maintenance and improvement of their transport, storage and other transit-related facilities. Also, priority attention should be given to the transit transport infrastructure needs of landlocked developing countries within the context of the "Aid for trade" initiative of the World Trade Organization. The efforts made by the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation of the United Nations Development Programme is commended and it is requested to continue its efforts to facilitate South-South cooperation in the areas of transit transport cooperation between landlocked and transit developing countries. In addition, international financial and development institutions and other relevant organizations should provide greater support and assistance in capacity-building to improve the efficiency of the use of existing transit facilities. Project evaluation procedures should take into account the special problems of landlocked developing countries to ease the commercial requirements for the projects.

24. The United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States should redouble its efforts to mobilize and coordinate the support measures by the United Nations system organizations and other international organizations for the effective implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action. For the immediate future the priority attention should be given to the effective preparation and successful organization of the midterm review of the Almaty Programme of Action.

VI. Conclusions

25. Given the geographical position of landlocked countries, transit transport systems and infrastructures are key sectors for the development and the competitiveness of their products in external trade. However, the current state of the infrastructures of those countries is appalling. It is one of their major handicaps.

26. During the Meeting, delegations clearly identified constraints suffered by their countries at the national, subregional and regional levels. In their declarations and presentations, they established priorities that should be emphasized and proposed actions in order to contribute to the debates that will be held in 2008 during the follow-up meeting for the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action.

27. The constraints identified were:

(a) Poor and inadequate infrastructures;

(b) High transport costs due to the low level of infrastructure services and to the numerous non-tariff barriers;

(c) Limited number of goods export towards international markets;

(d) High dependence of export products of an insignificant value added;

(e) Bureaucratic practices at border posts;

(f) Road insecurity;

(g) Poor and obsolete transport material.

28. The following priorities were identified:

(a) Preservation and strengthening of the existing transit facilities through appropriate maintenance;

(b) Interconnection of opening-up highway missing links connecting landlocked developing countries;

(c) Improvement of traffic free flow;

(d) Sustainability of transport infrastructure.

29. Concrete proposals were drawn from statements and presentations during the Meeting that should be considered in the preparation process of the midterm review in 2008. This will help expedite the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action. The proposals include:

(a) Supporting regional economic communities and other relevant organizations, such as corridor management committees, to develop community-based transit transport infrastructure development programmes;

(b) Strengthening capacities of regional economic communities and member States for the coordinated infrastructure development programmes and their implementation;

(c) Supporting regional economic communities to mobilize resources in order to implement the various components of the programmes (infrastructure and transport facilitation);

(d) Harmonizing road fees, documentation and procedures;

(e) Harmonizing axle load control and vehicles size;

(f) Developing pipeline projects, mainly on priority corridors;

(g) Drafting a concession railway standard agreement;

(h) Developing a regional railway standard plan;

(i) Developing inland waterway networks agreements and mobilizing the necessary financial resources for their effective implementation;

(j) Preparing and implementing a plan in line with the Yamoussokro Declaration;

(k) Developing a regional, search and rescue framework, taking into account technical and political dimensions;

(l) Mobilizing technical and financial partners to support programmes;

(m) Further developing subregional hubs (e.g., Peru-Brazil-Bolivia hub, central inter-oceanic hub, Capricorn hub, Paraguay-Brazil-Argentina-Chile hub and Paraguay-Parana waterway hub);

(n) Integrating the multimodal approach in the design, construction and the management of transit transport infrastructures and services;

(o) Developing a public-private partnership;

(p) Promoting a computerized goods monitoring system in the corridor;

(q) Setting up a coordinating unit with the United Nations bodies through United Nations Development Programme offices in each country;

(r) Mainstreaming the environmental aspect in transport infrastructure development projects through adequate environmental assessments.

30. The outcome of the Meeting should be presented to the midterm review as a substantive input. The outcome of the Meeting should also be issued as a document of the sixty-second session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Annex III to the letter dated 30 July 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Mali to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

List of participants at the Thematic Meeting on Transit Transport Infrastructure Development of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries

National delegations

Algeria

Armenia

Bangladesh

Belgium

Bhutan

Bolivia

Burkina Faso

Cameroon

Chad

China

Guinea

India

Kazakhstan

Lao People's Democratic Republic

Lesotho

Malawi

Mali

Mongolia

Mozambique

Namibia

Nepal

Niger

Paraguay

Senegal

South Africa

Swaziland

Turkey

Uganda

United States of America

Zambia

Zimbabwe

United Nations system

Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States of the United Nations Secretariat

Economic Commission for Africa

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

United Nations Development Programme

Regional and subregional organizations

African Union

East African Community

Economic Community for Central African States

West African Economic and Monetary Union

Inter-State Committee to fight desertification in the Sahel

Transit Transport Coordination Authority of the Northern Corridor

Transport Corridor Europe Caucasus Asia

Maritime Organization of West and Central Africa

National Council for Public-Private Partnerships

International and regional development banks

World Bank

African Development Bank

Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa

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Corrigendum

Annex II, paragraph 8

In the third sentence, the figure US$ 14.7 *should read* US$ 14.7 billion

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